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Outwitted

A Comedy-Dramatic Novelty

By

HARRY L. NEWTON

*Author of "The Go-Between," "Vaudevillainies," "The
Two-Two Train," "A Swell Affair," "The
College Chap," etc.*

BOSTON

WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1917

PS 635
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Outwitted

CHARACTERS

JAMES SHERMAN, *the Man.*
SOPHIE, *the Woman.*

SCENE.—A hotel apartment.

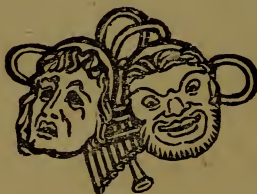
PLACE.—Somewhere in———(?)

TIME.—Evening.

NOTE

Sherman is a bright and breezy type, thoroughly American and is attired in stylish traveling suit of tweeds.

Sophie is a "Vampire" type, and her speech and mannerisms denote a foreign birth and residence. She wears handsome evening gown.



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no 1.

Outwitted

SCENE.—*Reception room in a hotel somewhere in Europe. Box set in two with practical door R., and door in back flat a little R. of C. Curtained window at L. Down L. is fireplace and mantel. At R. of C. is a library table, on which are writing materials, an open traveling bag and electric lamp with shade. All furniture and appointments to be as handsome as possible, and decidedly foreign in appearance. At L. is small table and phonograph. Three or four cheap pieces of statuary and a vase (to break) are set about on mantel and tables.*

(At rise stage is in total darkness, except for light shown through the half open door at R., the room beyond being the bedchamber of SHERMAN'S suite. As curtain is well up, SHERMAN'S voice is heard in the room, R., speaking at 'phone. He is hidden from view of audience, and speaks in quick, tense tone.)

SHERMAN *(off R. at 'phone)*. Yes, yes, I believe I understand, sir. I am to cross the frontier to-night. Yes, I have my passport . . . almost ready to leave now . . . just a few things more to throw in my bag. . . . No, I can't tell you that. . . . Listen, I am being closely watched. Yes . . . surely . . . give me that in code . . . go ahead . . . please . . . quick! *(Sound of key grating in lock in door R. of C. is heard and then door slowly swings open, disclosing SOPHIE bathed in strong light from flood at back. She peers cautiously into room and then just as cautiously enters, inserts key in door inside, listens intently an instant, then swiftly and noiselessly comes down to*

library table and turns on light. She then begins a hurried turning over of articles on table, rummages in traveling bag, pulls open table drawer, all done silently and swiftly in apparent search of some article. She registers keen disappointment, is about to continue her search, but stops with a sharp ejaculation and registers alarm as SHERMAN'S voice is heard off.) Yes. . . . I have it . . . O. K. I'll have time to decipher your code instructions on my ride to the frontier. Good-bye.

(The sharp click of 'phone receiver follows, and SOPHIE quickly withdraws to L., gazing wildly about her for a place of concealment. SHERMAN enters from R. He carries articles of wearing apparel, stops to switch on lights, and then, carelessly whistling a popular melody, comes to table. He throws articles on table, exits R., and immediately reënters with more articles of dress, all the while softly whistling. SOPHIE starts to steal in stealthy manner for door at back. He is about to pack things in bag, but stops suddenly as he discovers her. He stares at her dumbfounded; she is agitated but quickly recovers her pose, shrugs her shoulders and smiles innocently at him.)

SOPHIE (with slight foreign accent). Good-evening, Monsieur Sherman.

SHERMAN (gazing curiously at her, then at door and back again to her). I suppose it's perfectly all right, but . . .

SOPHIE (laughing). All a mistake, monsieur. I was under the impression I was entering my own suite, but mine evidently is the adjoining one.

SHERMAN (thoughtfully). Um . . . sounds reasonable. (Quickly.) But the door, madam, my door was locked!

SOPHIE (innocently). It was?

SHERMAN. It was.

SOPHIE. That could hardly be so since I am here, and . . . (Shrugs and smiles.)

SHERMAN (*throwing a couple of things into bag*). Madam, I haven't the heart to contradict a—a—lady, but that door was sure locked. Come now. What's the idea?

SOPHIE (*nonplussed for just an instant, then laughing softly*). Ah, you Americans! . . . You are so funny!

SHERMAN. Yes, I suppose we Americans have appeared funny to you foreigners for the past two years or so, but from now on we're going to try and be taken more seriously.

SOPHIE (*apparently deeply interested*). So?

SHERMAN. Quite so. Now you've got my name and nationality pat, would you oblige me by telling me how you came by said information?

SOPHIE (*rising and posing seductively*). Why, monsieur, you have indeed a short memory. I have met you before.

SHERMAN. You don't mean "met me." Followed me is more like it. (*Puts few more things in bag.*)

SOPHIE (*reprovingly*). Ah, monsieur, you wrong me.

SHERMAN. I hope I do, Madam or Miss . . . Miss . . . (*At a loss for name.*)

SOPHIE. I am called Sophie.

SHERMAN. Hey? Sophie what?

SOPHIE. Just Sophie, monsieur, that's all. Perhaps you might care to listen to the story of my life, eh?

SHERMAN (*quickly*). No, no, not on your life! Stories of women's lives all end the same. They're very touching. . . . (*Works fingers and thumb significantly.*) And now, Sophie . . . (*pulling out watch and noting time*) don't let me detain you. We've had a pleasant little chat . . . (*throwing more things in bag*) and I must go hence from here very shortly.

SOPHIE (*seemingly surprised*). Ah, you are leaving town . . . the country perhaps . . . yes?

SHERMAN. Surest thing you know.

(*Picks up revolver from table, wipes it carefully with handkerchief, then aims it at vase on mantelpiece and then slowly swings it around so that the muzzle*

covers her. He does this business as though he were testing condition of gun, and quite carelessly.)

SOPHIE (*screaming as gun is leveled at her*). Monsieur, please be careful!

SHERMAN (*apparently just realizing that he has covered her with gun*). Oh, I beg your pardon. Nervous regarding firearms? (*Places gun in bag and laughs.*)

SOPHIE. Deathly. . . . I . . . I have a horror of them.

SHERMAN. Then this room is no place for you, Sophie.

SOPHIE. You . . . you mean you would shoot?

SHERMAN. I believe I would . . . depends on circumstances.

SOPHIE (*laughing*). Circumstances, monsieur? You speak in riddles. (*Shrugs.*) For instance . . . what particular circumstances?

SHERMAN. Well, we'll say that *somebody* was opposed to my leaving here to-night. In that event, I would be compelled to . . . to get rough and shoot up the place. (*She makes gesture.*) No! No! You have nothing to fear . . . only, as I said before, you'd better leave while you are enjoying perfectly good health. (*He closes bag with a vicious snap.*) Savee, Sophie?

SOPHIE (*seductively*). Ah, Monsieur Sherman, you do not understand . . . you do not see . . . the situation . . . you do not comprehend. . . .

SHERMAN (*going to door at back, then turning to her*). Permit me. . . . It's improper for a lady to be . . . you know . . . people will talk.

(*Signifies that she is to go; holds the door open for her egress.*)

SOPHIE (*going to door alongside of him, but making no move to pass through; earnestly*). Listen . . . there is still a chance for you. . . . (*He starts in surprise.*) You speak of resorting to firearms . . . violence! Bah! You alone, against many. . . . (*Takes his arms, shoves him through door so that he*

can look off R. and L.) Look, monsieur! Tell me what you see!

SHERMAN (*quick look R. and L.; then reëntering room*). Um! They seem to be waiting for somebody, don't they? (*Closes door.*)

SOPHIE. Yes!! You!!! Come!

(*Takes him to window, raises curtain and points.*)

SHERMAN (*lightly*). Looks like I would have an unpleasant quarter of an hour or so.

(*Goes quickly to table, picks up cap and bag, then starts for door.*)

SOPHIE (*springing in front of him, clutching his arm*). Stop, you fool! Where would you go?

SHERMAN. Why, for the frontier, of course. (*She clutches him tighter.*) Now don't make a fuss. . . . (*Releases her hold.*) I'm no wonder, but I figure I can give that bunch a run for their money.

SOPHIE. You shall . . . you must listen to me. . . . Those men out there are the pick of the Regent's Secret Service Corps, with orders to stop at nothing to gain their ends. You have something the Regent wants. . . . They have their orders. . . . Now you comprehend?

SHERMAN. Ah! (*Starts nervously.*)

SOPHIE (*triumphantly*). At last! (*Shrugs and smiles.*) You see, monsieur . . . I know something?

SHERMAN (*coming back to table and setting bag on it*). Yes . . . I rather thought you did. . . . Now don't be stingy, Sophie. Split it fifty-fifty with me.

SOPHIE (*smiling*). Maybe it shall be so. Who knows? First, tell me, monsieur, what that something is the Regent is so anxious to acquire?

SHERMAN (*thoughtfully*). Let me think. . . . Oh, yes, his nobs wants my phonograph there. (*Indicates it. She turns in surprise and looks at phonograph. He goes to it.*) Greatest little machine ever invented. Reproduces anything exactly the same as the higher priced Victrolas. Our price five dollars. No home

happy or complete without one. James Sherman, general agent for all European territory. . . . Very simple to operate . . . a few turns of this little crank . . . drop the needle, and . . . (*Starts machine.*) There you are.

(*He stops machine after it plays a short strain.*)

SOPHIE. No, monsieur . . . very good but not good enough. . . . You fool only yourself with such talk. Listen carefully. That which you have are the plans of a new war plane. (*He shows agitation by a quick start.*) Not that. (*Indicates phonograph.*)

SHERMAN. By Jove, you have me interested. . . .

SOPHIE. Those plans were made by one of the Regent's subjects. . . .

SHERMAN (*forgetting himself*). There's a doubt regarding that point. All right, Sophie. You have it on me. I'll admit that I have this man's plans in my possession, but I bought them . . . there's nothing crooked in the transaction . . . my government doesn't deal in such things. . . . That's why chaps like me go the limit when assigned to jobs of this sort. . . . We know we're going to get a square deal from our little old U. S. A.!

SOPHIE. Bah! You will have bad luck this time, monsieur—very bad luck! You will "go the limit." And lose!

(*'Phone bell off R. rings sharply. They both give a quick start and exchange glances.*)

SHERMAN (*going toward door R.*). You'll pardon me, I know. (*Turns at door.*) In the meantime, amuse yourself. (*Indicates phonograph and exits.* SOPHIE shrugs. For an instant she gazes after him, then her eyes turn curiously to phonograph. She registers sudden interest and then goes quickly to it, looks again at door R., then drops needle and starts machine. As the music begins she commences to sway with the swing of it and finally starts to dance in time to it. She gradually works her way across stage to door R., pausing every now and then in cautious manner as if in fear of his returning. The idea of the business is that she wants to hear his

conversation and takes the business of dancing to music as a means to cover up her eavesdropping. Finally works to table, takes revolver from bag, dances to fireplace and lays revolver on mantelpiece. She hears him returning and quickly drops into a chair, registering supreme innocence.) So you think I haven't a chance, eh?

(Picks up cigar and lights for ash business.)

SOPHIE *(rising)*. Monsieur, there's but the one chance for you to reach your country . . . alive! Give me those plans!

SHERMAN. Say, don't make me laugh.

SOPHIE *(going to him, using all the seductiveness and Vampire wiles at her command)*. Supposing, monsieur, I were to tell you that I am your friend, that I wish you nothing but good . . . that I . . . I love you! *(He draws back in astonishment.)* Ah, I know women in your country do not make such admissions to your men. But here . . . here we are different. Our blood is warmer, and we, if we love a man, tell him so. . . . We do not wait for his caresses, his kisses . . . we take them . . . so!

(She attempts to embrace him.)

SHERMAN *(holding her off with one hand)*. Here, wait a minute. . . .

SOPHIE. You . . . you refuse my love . . . my kisses!

SHERMAN. Yes. . . . You see, this is so sudden.

SOPHIE. I know . . . I know . . . we are impulsive in my country . . . we do not wait . . . love is our one master . . . we obey only him. . . . Besides, it is my love for you that alone can save you. Love me, monsieur, . . . kiss me. . . . Yes?

SHERMAN. No!

SOPHIE. Ah, you hate me?

SHERMAN. No! . . . Now see here, Sophie, I'm wise to the game you're playing, and you can deal me out of it. Maybe some men would let you pull the love

stuff just to gain their point. But I'm working along other lines. . . . Get me?

SOPHIE (*now changing to desperation; laughing scornfully*). Bah! Do you imagine that I care anything for you? Not that much. . . . (*Snaps fingers contemptuously.*) Listen to me. I too am in the service of my country. The Regent assigned to me the duty of relieving you of those plans . . . I, alone, monsieur . . . alone, do you understand?

SHERMAN. But those men out there?

SOPHIE. Mere stragglers and loiterers. No, it is I . . . I with whom you have to deal . . . and I never fail, monsieur. I have tried other tactics, now I shall try one more. (*Runs to door, shuts and locks it, throws key on floor. He watches her curiously and puffing calmly on cigar.*) In this, my country, monsieur, the honor of women is held a sacred thing. We shall presume that you have enticed me into your apartment, locked the door and then attempted to attack me.

SHERMAN. Oh, come now, Sophie. You know better than that.

SOPHIE. Yes, *I* do, but what of others? Watch closely, monsieur, and we shall see, what we shall see. (*Throws over a couple of chairs.*) Soon I shall scream for help, monsieur, and when they answer there must be signs of a desperate struggle. So! (*Breaks vase.*)

SHERMAN (*calmly; at table smoking*). Um, not at all a bad idea. . . .

SOPHIE (*turning sofa over and throwing pillows on floor*). They always accept the woman's version, and you . . . you will either be torn to pieces by my infuriated countrymen . . . or be dragged to prison. . . .

SHERMAN. Gee, I'll have a lot to tell the folks back home.

SOPHIE (*smashing piece of statuary*). I shall plead with them to take you to prison. . . .

SHERMAN. Noble hearted woman. . . .

SOPHIE. And then . . . then . . . (*Laughs wildly.*) Then, monsieur, the plans you have bought with your country's gold will be mine. I shall win!

My Regent will honor me : . . . your government, bah! It is powerless to interfere. . . . I must win. . . . Ah, monsieur, God pity the loser in my country's service! (*Breaks another vase.*)

SHERMAN. Keep it up, Sophie. You're beginning to be the life of the party.

SOPHIE. Ah, you laugh now, but wait. . . . (*Loosens her hair.*) It will not prove so funny a little later. Now we are quite ready. . . . The stage is set for the grand finale. . . . Once more I appeal to you. . . . Give me those plans, or . . .

SHERMAN. Don't mind me. Go ahead and get to the finale. It ought to be good. You're the author of it.

SOPHIE. You fool! I have but to scream, and . . .

SHERMAN. I can see my finish. Don't mind me. Scream if you like. (*She draws herself up as if to scream, but he stops her with a gesture.*) Sophie, I have no desire to make you an object of ridicule before the guests of this hotel, so don't do the screaming thing until you've seen the cards I hold in this game.

SOPHIE. I know now, Monsieur Sherman. I hold the best hand and you know it. . . . Yes?

SHERMAN (*indicating disordered condition of room*). By all outward appearances and the disorder prevailing in this room, you and I have had a furious struggle. Right?

SOPHIE (*smiling in triumph*). It is so. . . . I have planned it well.

SHERMAN. No, you only think you have. For instance, take a look at my cigar. . . . See the long ash?

SOPHIE. Yes, but I . . . I . . .

SHERMAN. My dear girl, it would be an utter impossibility for me to put up quite such a desperate struggle as these signs indicate, and still retain this long ash on my cigar. . . . Now you may scream when you are ready, Sophie. (*SOPHIE registers defeat, then turns, goes quickly to mantel and gets revolver. She moves slowly toward SHERMAN, who is at library table, conveying to audience that she is desperate and is about to shoot him or kill herself. At a pace or two from him he turns*

and discovers her with revolver. He draws himself erect, for quick action, if necessary, when she suddenly bursts into a hearty peal of laughter.) Hello, what's the new trick, Sophie?

SOPHIE. In only one way, Mr. Sherman, did I outwit you in our war of wits. I made you believe that I was somebody other than my real self.

(Draws card from front of gown and extends it to him.)

SHERMAN *(taking card, reads)*. "Sarah Clancy, United States Secret Service."

(Looks from card to her in surprise.)

SOPHIE. The explanation is simple. The chief put you to the test. He wanted to make sure that you were the clever, brave and trustworthy operator you had been cracked up to be. Congratulations, Monsieur Sherman . . . and bless your loyal heart.

SHERMAN *(with an audible sigh of relief)*. Yes, and bless the man who invented a good cigar. *(Turns to table, picks up bag, coat and cap. She hands him revolver, then goes to door, unlocks it, and holds it open. He goes quickly to door, turns, draws himself erect and brings right hand up in stiff military salute, then exits; quickly reënters, peeks about edge of door and smiles.)* Good-bye, Sophie!

SOPHIE. Good-bye, Jimmie! *(Clasp hands, to)*

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WILLIAM JEFFERSON JORDAN, "*Shine*," the playwright, member of "*Paint and Powder*."

BOB RICHARDS, captain of the football team, host at Forest Lodge.

H. GARDNER HUMPHREY, football manager.

FRANK BELL, electrician for "*Paint and Powder*."

BILL BLACK,

JACK BROWN,

TOM WHITE,

SAM GREEN,

MESSENGER BOY.

DOROTHY SPRAGUE,

EDITH RICHARDS, Bob's sister,

RUTH SARGENT,

MRS. HODGKINS, Bob's aunt, the chaperon.

AMY SINCLAIR GRANDBY, a Radcliffe student, Edith's friend.

} stage hands for "*Paint and Powder*."

} Students at Jackson College.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Dining-room at Forest Lodge, morning.

ACT II.—Same as Act I. Evening of the following day.

ACT III.—Stage of the college gymnasium, on the afternoon preceding the performance of the *Paint and Powder* play.

THE CRIBBER

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By W. P. McIntosh

Six males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, three easy interiors. Plays an hour and a half. A student finds an examination paper that a professor has mislaid and hides it for temporary safety in another student's desk, where it is found in a search for a lady's letter by a jealous rival. The case looks black against a very popular man for a while, but is finally cleared up. Co-educational piece, with good atmosphere and lots of incidental fun.

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| Liza Ann's Lament. | When I Dit Drowed. |
| Mine and Mary Ellen's. | When My Birthday Was. |
| Mother Entertains. | When Pa Put on His Skates. |
| My Ma, She Knows. | When Thomas Takes His Pen. |
| The Naughty Doll. | Which One Was Kept. |
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